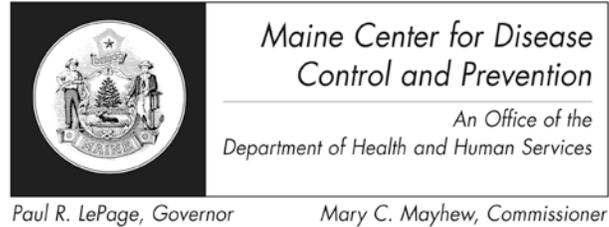


Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) Fact Sheet



What is HPS?

HPS is a serious disease caused by a virus that affects your lungs. You can get it by coming in contact with the saliva, urine, or droppings of infected mice and rats (rodents).

What are the signs and symptoms?

Early symptoms include fever, chills, headache, and muscle pain of the shoulders, lower back and thighs. You may also have nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, dizziness, or cough. In severe cases, cough and shortness of breath could lead to buildup of fluid in the lungs and severe lack of oxygen in the blood. In some cases, you can get low blood pressure.

How is it spread?

It is spread by some types of infected rodents' saliva, urine, or droppings. Humans get sick from breathing in tiny bits of saliva, urine, droppings, or nesting materials that are in the air, or when they enter broken skin, the nose or the mouth. If an infected rodent bites someone, the virus may be spread to that person, but this is rare. Person-to-person spread of HPS is not common.

How common is it?

HPS is only seen in the Americas. It was first identified in 1993 in the United States. Since then, over 500 cases have been reported in the western half of the United States and in some eastern states. There has only been one reported case of HPS in a Maine resident. Still, you should know how to protect yourself from HPS, especially when traveling.

How is it treated?

There is no treatment for HPS, so prevention is best.

How can I prevent it?

The best way to keep from getting HPS is to keep rodents from building a nest in homes and workplaces. Also, avoid contact with rodent saliva, urine, and droppings.

- Don't leave food in open areas that rodents might find
- Seal off rodent entry holes or gaps
- Trap rats and mice with a snap trap
- Before entering areas where rodents might be living, open doors and windows to let in fresh air
- Wear gloves and dust mask and spray rodent droppings with bleach and water before cleaning
- Never use a vacuum cleaner or broom to clean rodent droppings or nesting materials

What should I do if I think I have it?

If you have had contact with rodents and have fever, deep muscle aches, or shortness of breath, see your healthcare provider right away. Tell him or her about your contact with rodents.

Where can I get more information?

For more information, contact your healthcare provider or local health center. You can also contact the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention at 1-800-821-5821 or www.mainepublichealth.gov/. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website - <http://www.cdc.gov> - is another excellent source of health information.